

APPENDIX G - Draft Fairer Future budget principles

The council's "Fairer Future budget principles" will underpin the council's budget decisions and seek to limit the impact of budget cuts on the most vulnerable.

Our budget principles are:

- we'll continue to manage budgets carefully and keep council tax low, only raising it to protect the most vulnerable
- we'll be responsible guardians of public finances and when possible plan ahead by developing a longer term budget
- we'll make prudent use of reserves to support the budget to enable the smoothing of impacts over time.

To achieve this:

- we'll spend money as if it were coming from our own pocket; we'll put value for money at the heart of the budget, taking every opportunity to modernise and transform working practices and to make the council more efficient
- we'll continue to find alternative ways of providing services more efficiently and effectively by working jointly with the health sector, the voluntary sector, local businesses, other local authorities and other partner organisations.
- we'll seek to generate additional income by reviewing fees, charges and contributions and seeking further opportunities to provide commercial services; this may include introducing charges for some discretionary services that are currently free
- some of our current services may stop; many will have to be delivered differently or reduced
- we'll be open, honest and accountable
- we'll build on the outcomes of previous budget consultations, reflecting the priorities of our residents and stakeholders as we develop proposals
- we'll conduct ongoing consultation on the tough choices we must make and be transparent with any specific group, groups of users or staff who may be affected by any cut, reduction or significant change in service provision as soon as possible and explore with them other ways to provide the service
- we'll conduct an equalities impact assessment for our budget proposals, with specific reference to the work undertaken as part of our Southwark Stands Together programme
- we'll ensure that climate emergency considerations are properly assessed for all relevant budget options.
- a reduced budget will inevitably mean that the size and composition of our workforce will change; we'll treat our staff with respect, do all we can to retain staff through redeployment and retraining and when necessary will seek to assist staff leaving the council

At a time of unprecedented uncertainty, the budget will continue to prioritise the promises we made in the Fairer Future council plan and will seek to protect services for the most vulnerable.